

## Is there any evidence of HCV transmission through breast milk?

There is no evidence of transmission of HCV through breast milk. Mothers who are infected with HCV, however, should refrain from breastfeeding if their nipples are cracked, damaged or bleeding.



## What are the recommended vaccines for children with perinatal HCV?



There is currently no vaccine available for HCV. There are, however, vaccines for hepatitis A and hepatitis B. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends all children receive the hepatitis A vaccine at one year of age and the hepatitis B vaccine at birth. Children infected with HCV should receive both the hepatitis A and hepatitis B vaccines to help prevent further liver complications.

## Perinatal HCV Reporting Requirements

As of January 1, 2018, perinatal hepatitis C is a reportable disease in Michigan and nationally.



## For more information

For more information, contact the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' (MDHHS) Viral Hepatitis Unit.

### MDHHS Viral Hepatitis Unit

- 2018 Perinatal Hepatitis C Toolkit  
[www.michigan.gov/hepatitis](http://www.michigan.gov/hepatitis)
- Phone: 517-335-8165
- E-mail: [MDHHS-Hepatitis@michigan.gov](mailto:MDHHS-Hepatitis@michigan.gov)

### CDC

- Website: [www.cdc.gov/hepatitis](http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis)

### AASLD

- Children: [www.hcvguidelines.org/unique-populations/children](http://www.hcvguidelines.org/unique-populations/children)

### American Academy of Pediatrics

- Red Book:  
[www.redbook.solutions.aap.orgchapter.aspx?sectionid=88187160&bookid=1484](http://www.redbook.solutions.aap.orgchapter.aspx?sectionid=88187160&bookid=1484)



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# Perinatal Hepatitis C


## For Pediatricians

*This brochure contains information regarding perinatal hepatitis C, testing recommendations for infants, and treatment information for perinatal hepatitis C infection.*


What is perinatal hepatitis C?

The hepatitis C virus (HCV) is a blood-borne pathogen transmitted primarily through exposure to infected blood. In some circumstances, transmission of HCV can occur among infants born to mothers infected with HCV. **Perinatal hepatitis C** occurs when the mother passes HCV to the child in utero or during childbirth (also known as vertical transmission).

Why are infants becoming a growing concern for HCV risk?


 The number of women of childbearing age diagnosed with HCV is growing by the hundreds each year. This is most likely due to the rise of HCV infections in the young adult populations as a byproduct of the concurrent opioid epidemic. With the rise of HCV infection among women of childbearing age, there is an increasing concern of the risk of mother-to-child transmission.

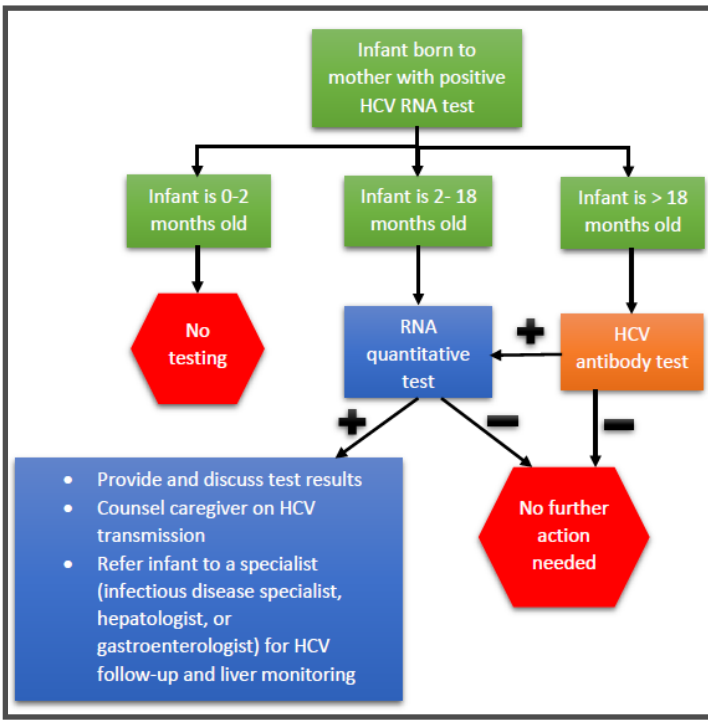
What infants should I test for perinatal HCV?

You should test infants born to mothers infected with HCV according to the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD). 



When should infants born to mothers infected with HCV be tested?

 Maternal antibodies can remain in the infant for up to 18 months of age; therefore, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) along with the American Liver Foundation (ALF) recommends holding off on antibody testing until the infant is over 18 months of age. HCV RNA testing, however, can be done as early as the first well-child visit around 2 months of age as recommended by both AASLD and the AAP (**Note: See the Testing Sequence Flow Chart below.**)



AASLD Guidelines for HCV	Testing in Children
Age at Testing	Testing Procedure
After 18 months	HCV Antibody Test
	OR
After 8 weeks	HCV RNA and repeat after 12 months

Can children be treated for HCV infection?

Based on Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval and recommendations, there are currently two prescription drugs (Harvoni and Sovaldi) that can treat children over the age of 12 with HCV.

Treatment recommendations may change over time; therefore, to learn about the latest treatment recommendations from the AASLD, please visit the AASLD Recommendations webpage at [www.hcvguidelines.org/unique-populations/children](http://www.hcvguidelines.org/unique-populations/children).

What are the symptoms of children with perinatal HCV?

The majority of children with perinatal HCV infection will have mild or no symptoms. Children experiencing more aggressive disease symptoms can develop fibrosis as early as 8 years of age. Symptoms that can occur among those with liver damage caused by HCV infection include fatigue, itchy skin, muscle soreness, nausea, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, jaundice, and dark urine.

